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Cap 6 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
PRODUCTION AND MARKETING ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

## POULTRY GRADING AND INSPECTION PROGRAM

### High Lights for Consumers

By Rowena S. Carpenter, *Home Economist, Poultry Branch*

The U. S. Department of Agriculture's revised program for the grading and inspection of poultry is of interest to all consumers. Homemakers...and food managers in hotels, hospitals, and institutions will appreciate (1) the new informative labels for poultry, (2) the simple terms used to describe poultry, and (3) the requirements for sanitation in all "official" poultry-processing plants.

The rules and regulations for this new poultry program (which also includes domestic rabbits), were published in the Federal Register, November 15, 1949, and went into effect on January 1, 1950. The use of the program is VOLUNTARY.

The regulations apply only to those members of the poultry industry who *request* the grading and inspection services. Therefore, all poultry that comes to market will *not* be graded or inspected *officially*. But those processors who wish to label their poultry as Federal or Federal-State graded or inspected, must follow the regulations of the USDA, and they may then use the letters "U. S." on their labels.

A very important part of the program deals with the new requirements for the sanitation of dressing plants. *Now* all *ready-to-cook* poultry that is prepared in *official* plants, approved by the Department of Agriculture, will be processed under sanitary conditions. Beginning in January 1951, the same sanitary standards will be effective also in *official* plants processing *dressed* poultry.

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PACIFIC DAIRY & POULTRY ASSOCIATION

1304 E. 7th St., Los Angeles 21, Calif.  
26 years' service as  
Pacific States Butter, Egg, Cheese, and Poultry Ass'n

GPO—PMA 375

### Services Available on Request

The new regulations provide for a grading service, an inspection service, and a combination of the two services.

Poultry that is officially *graded* is examined for quality, and a grade (U. S. Grade A or U. S. Grade B) is then assigned to the bird. A bird of high quality (U. S. Grade A) will have no deformities (such as crooked breastbone), will be well fleshed (full breast and meaty legs), will have fat well distributed under the skin, and will have practically no tears or bruises, and few, if any, pinfeathers. A bird of B quality (U. S. Grade B) will fall short of these standards in one or more respects. Birds of C quality, still lower in the quality scale, will not be individually labeled. Individual birds that show evidence of any condition that may make them unwholesome or unfit for food are *not* included in any official grade.

Poultry that is officially *inspected for wholesomeness* is examined by a Federal veterinarian. If poultry is stamped "Inspected for Wholesomeness," the bird and its internal organs have been examined and have been found free of evidence of any condition that may make the bird unwholesome or unfit for food. (The inspection stamp does *not* refer to quality or grade.)

Some processing plants will apply for *both* the grading and the inspection services, and poultry from those plants will be officially graded *and* inspected.

### New Terms Used

Broiling and frying chickens, formerly two classes, are now one class: *Broilers or fryers*. Stewing chickens, formerly classed as fowl, may now be described by any one of the following: *Hens, stewing chickens, or fowl*. *Dressed* will now be used instead of N. Y. dressed or market dressed. (Dressed birds have been bled and picked, but not drawn.) *Ready-to-cook* will now be used to describe poultry that has been fully drawn or eviscerated.



### The Grade Label

The official grade label will be in the form of a SHIELD. This grade label tells the *quality* (U. S. Grade A or U. S. Grade B); the *style* of processing (dressed or ready-to-cook); and the *class* (for example, stewing chicken; young turkey). The label also states that the product has been *Government-graded*, and gives the number of the processing plant in which the grading was done. (See SHIELD design.)

Note that the shield design is used on either dressed or ready-to-cook poultry that has been graded for quality under sanitary conditions but has *not* been inspected by a Federal veterinarian.



Graded Dressed



Graded Ready-to-Cook

### The Inspection Mark

Ready-to-cook poultry that has been *inspected for wholesomeness* by a Federal veterinarian (but not graded for quality) will carry an inspection mark in the form of a CIRCLE.



Inspected for  
Wholesomeness  
Ready-to-Cook

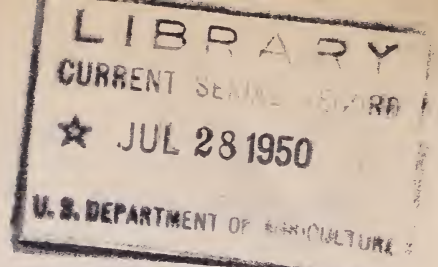
### The Combination Label

Ready-to-cook poultry that has been *both graded and inspected* will carry a combination label, a SHIELD WITHIN A CIRCLE.



Graded and Inspected  
Ready-to-Cook

Points for Consumers to Remember



In the new designs for poultry labels, consumers will note that two steps have been taken toward making grade labeling more uniform:

1. The *circle* on poultry that has been inspected for wholesomeness is much like the inspection label on meat (the purple stamp--a circle).

2. The *shield* that is now used to denote the grade (or quality) of poultry is in line with some official grade labeling that was already in effect. Cartons of eggs, packaged butter, canned fruits and vegetables, and dressed and eviscerated poultry have been grade-labeled with the shield design for some time. (In the former poultry program, the shield design was used *not only* on officially graded poultry but also on eviscerated poultry that had been inspected for wholesomeness. The present use of the shield to denote grading and the circle to denote inspection makes poultry labeling easier for the consumer to learn.)

In buying poultry the consumer considers:

KIND (for example, chickens, turkeys, ducks);  
CLASS within each kind (for example, stewing chicken, fryer turkey, roasting duckling);  
STYLE OF PROCESSING (dressed, ready-to-cook).

She also decides whether she wants a bird that has been graded (A or B), inspected for wholesomeness, or both graded and inspected.

She then checks the information on the label, to see just what has been done to the bird she selects. The label may be on the bird itself, or in the case of individually packaged poultry, on the package.

The sooner the consumer asks for officially graded and inspected poultry, the sooner it will be made available to her.